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Europe, China and Security Governance: is there evidence of normative convergence?

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Abstract

Normative power can be defined as the ability to govern interdependencies by means of rules, regimes and compliance strategies. This paper presents two case studies in security governance - international responsibility to protect in Sudan and counter-proliferation policies towards Iran's nuclear programme - to evaluate the degree of normative convergence between China and Europe. It concludes that there are still major differences between Europe and China on employing normative strategies in security governance but that both modes of governance and identities as security actors are mobile so that the trend is towards convergence, albeit with some distance still to travel.

Introduction

In both Europe and China there is now a great deal of attention being paid to normative power, and the related idea of soft power, though it seems their perception of this form of politics differs considerably. In Europe normative power is strongly associated with the ability to exert authority without the use of force so that the European mode of security is predicated on normative objectives like good governance, human rights, and ultimately an international society that has democratic politics as its common identity (ESS, 10; Manners, 2008). In China normative power has more to do with cultural soft power than with formal norms (Hu, 2011). This is still a claim of authority by means of identity, but authority embodied in China's self-conception as a civilization experiencing revival by rapid power modernisation. This difference in the understanding of normative power - what it is and how it relates to external strategies - is of rising significance because of geopolitical changes in Europe-China relations. The Europe-China relationship is only in part a bilateral relationship now and increasingly involves complex engagements in different issue areas and geopolitical contexts. In the past many of the issue areas were global level - climate change, trade and knowledge regimes - but regional engagements are quickly rising in prominence. Thus it is appropriate to conduct analysis to test the degree of convergence or otherwise in the normative power assumptions of Europe and China - the significance of norms and rules, the viability and desirability of regimes, and the possibilities and limits of compliance strategies in international society. To do this, this

paper will examine the most important, but arguably most difficult, aspect of normative interdependence, that of security governance.

Both China and Europe are concentrating on the range of security issues they confront. Europeans call this range national and human security, and the Chinese traditional and non-traditional security. To date they have limited experience of working together across a broad range of governance issues in either traditional or non-traditional security. This lack of shared experience is partly conditioned by the recent emergence of Europe and China in the fields of security governance; but also by the differences in certain core assumptions, of which the most significant is interventionism. China views the UN, and certain other core international institutions such as the IAEA, as being the only bodies that can endorse intervention in hard or soft terms - by force or by norms. China also pays significant attention to the views of regional bodies when deciding its position: China tends to view regional conflicts as falling within a certain purview to be arbitrated by regional organisations, if they choose to exert such a role. Europe on the other hand is often focussed on normative intervention: it sees the resolution of security issues as generating a requirement for compliance. This compliance may occasionally require force but more often it is established through obligation to regimes and the deployment of sanctions against those who will not comply with regimes. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that this is an impassable difference between Europe and China.¹ China has, for example, been largely supportive of the hard and soft intervention in Afghanistan given the scale of international criminality being organised there. China's concern with interventionism is that it is too often the default approach of the Western countries rather than one reserved for exceptional international risks such as that posed by Afghanistan. Therefore it is the frequency of intervention and the selection of cases for intervention on which European governments and the Chinese government tend to differ. This said, China's posture on intervention is changing as its international commitments rise and with its awareness of the nature of security interdependence: China's willingness to modify non-intervention norms is frequently correlated to perceptions of how a security risk may impact on China's own interests (Gill and Small, 2012: 27-32). Therefore, the potential for security convergence between Europe and China tends to arise where either a) the cooperation has been endorsed by the UN or some other accepted international or regional body, such as counter-piracy operations in the Arabian Sea; or b) where European or Chinese security

¹ For discussions of China's movement away from rigid sovereigntism and towards the notion of international responsibility, see Carlson (2011) and Zhu (2010: 40-47).

interests require that they engage around the security issue - the nature of the problem and what should be done about it.

This paper will examine what is happening to European and Chinese perceptions of security governance, focusing on the role of normative power. It does this by presenting two case studies that examine normative dimensions of security governance. The first will be in the field of human/ non-traditional security examining the norm of responsibility to protect in Africa, with the problem of civil conflict in Sudan as the case. The second is in the field on national/ traditional security and takes the issue of nuclear proliferation as its focus, with Iran's nuclear programme as the case. Each case will evaluate evidence of normative convergence. The tests for normative convergence that we will apply are:

1. What is the degree of international responsibility in the case, and who gets to select the case?
2. What is the appropriate response of international actors to the security issue: what is the range of response methods?
3. What is an acceptable degree of intervention in normative power terms - to what degree should international actors be prepared to compel compliance on the dispute parties?

Case Study 1: International responsibility in Africa and the Sudan case

This case study applies the notion of responsibility to protect in Africa, with the problem of civil conflict in Sudan as the case. The UN, AU, IGAD (The Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa), the troika (UN, AU, and Arab League) and the international community as a whole have made many efforts to resolve the conflict in Sudan and facilitate post-war reconstruction in Sudan and the newly established South Sudan. However, the future of the two states remains uncertain and cannot be solved by any single stakeholder. Since each actor involved in Sudan has its own interests and perspectives, a collective effort rather than competitive interests is of great significance in providing some tangible commitments to the future of the two states. China, although it can hardly be considered a key player in Sudan, has drawn the world's attention due to its controversial engagement in Darfur as well as its contribution to building new infrastructure. Therefore, the following case study will identify the similarity and differences between EU and China over the Sudan civil war by considering the norm of international responsibility to protect.

Background introduction to the case: the Sudan crisis

Sudan has suffered a 22-year civil war between north and south which has “left over two million Sudanese dead and uprooted millions more” (Large and Patey, 2011: 1). With the mediation of the UN, AU and the troika, Khartoum and The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and conducted the referendum after six years of interim period. When the southern people had successfully voted for independence in 2011, the once largest, yet one of the least developed states in Africa, separated into two countries. However, this is not the end of the problems for the two countries as the demarcation of the border between north and south, the status of the three areas Abyei, the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile, and financial arrangements have disturbed the fragile peace from time to time. The tensions in Darfur remain unsolved. Oil-production, revenues and the use of the pipeline to Port Sudan continue to cause unrest. It can be said that the civil war in Sudan is so complicated due to factors such as the marginalized area and relations between peoples with a different ethnic, religious and tribal background who fight for key resources (oil and water) and freedom. These groups seek the support of respective stakeholders and need continuous, forceful, and collective engagement from the international community, otherwise, the state is in danger of secession and fragmentation. As an African academic, Dr. Abdurrahman Ahmed Osma, noted, “the south will go, Darfur needs a little push and will go, the Nuba Mountain will go, the Southern Blue Nile will go, the East will go away from Sudan” (cited in Johnson, 2011: 217).

Why have achievements and progress in conflict resolution been so limited despite the many international efforts? In the case of China, it lacks a clear, coherent and long-term diplomatic strategy and is short of experience in cooperation with the Western countries. For Europe, its ideological method and use of sanctions has proved to be ineffective. China, has long adhered to the norms of non-interference, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and this meant it appeared a supporter of the Bashir government in Khartoum. The West has given dual reaction to China's relations with Khartoum: on one hand, they are afraid it may undermine the efforts and sanctions made by the Western governments and provide Bashir an alternative sponsor, notably in finance and arms; on the other hand, they expect China to use its political influence to pressure Khartoum for a peaceful solution. In contrast, the close relationship with Sudan drew China into a dual dilemma. One is striking a balance between an old friend Khartoum and a new friend Juba. The other is the economic interest in Sudan versus Beijing's desire for a responsible power image on the world stage. As one Sudan professor pointed out China has been able

to out-compete Europe and America in gaining the hearts and minds of the people in Africa, because historically “while the West led by the USA and Europe cut off their aid relations with Sudan, China was more than ready to come in without any preconditions” (Sudan Tribune, 2007). Sudan is so desperately in need of funding, not only because of the humanitarian crisis there, but also because the newly separated governments have to show some improvements to meet the expectation of long suffering peoples and to prevent further unrest. Unfortunately, besides the pledges that did not come true, five years after the CPA only one third of the resources from Multi Donor Trust Fund have been spent, others remain on the MDTF account due to bank procedures (Johnson, 2011: 217).

What is the nature and degree of international responsibility in Sudan?

Sudan is a country where more than 2 million people lost their lives and 4.5 million people were forced to flee from their homes. In UN estimates, between January and August 2012 political, inter-communal, and resource-driven clashes killed over 2,600 people (HRW, 2012). Evidence also showed security forces fighting against armed militias who committed serious abuses against civilians. According to The Human Rights Watch World Report 2012 hundreds of civilians, including women and children, were killed, and tens of thousands of people were displaced, primarily in Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei states. Governments, opposition militants and soldiers have all failed to take adequate precautions to protect civilians. The Sudan situation no doubt falls under the principles of R2P which holds that where a state fails to protect its citizens from mass atrocities and peaceful measures have failed, the international community has the responsibility to intervene through coercive measures such as sanctions. The UN, EU, AU, and US continue to intervene under the guideline of resolution 2046 (2012) and the AU road map (HRW, 2012). But practically the conflict is escalating and humanitarian agencies still cannot meet the health, nutrition, and security needs of the displaced Sudanese and refugees caused by the conflicts.

In contrast, China has its own perception of international responsibility in the case of Sudan based on its diplomatic philosophy. As Loke (2009: 196) suggests, “China’s responsible behavior is driven more by an instrumental calculation of its national interests”. Although a doctrine of national interests seems to contradict with those of international obligations, constructivists argue that “changing international social structures.....re-conceptualizes their interest” (Finnemore, 1996: 2-3). This means national interests are fluid and change over time through interaction with international

society. It partly explains why China's attitude towards Darfur has undergone an evolution since 2007, from initially seeking to undermine international efforts to resolve the Darfur and South Sudan crises to subsequently putting pressure on Khartoum to engage with the international community (Taylor, 2009: 50-54). In this case, before considering China's engagement in Sudan, it is necessary to evaluate China's national interests in the Sudan case.

China has three national interests in Sudan, the first of which is the political interest. Khartoum, China's old friend, like many of other African states, has great significance because of China's political objectives. That is to say, African states always serve as diplomatic alliances on the world stage, a follower in international institutions and a supporter for the "One-China" policy. Second, China's new engagement in South Sudan is largely driven by economic interests, such as energy supply and access to the Sudanese market, initially the arms market but evolving into infrastructure and service industry (ICG, 2012). Since energy security is the key to China's sustainable economic growth securing this supply from Africa can be categorized as China's national interest. At the same time the Chinese also have considerable commercial and financial interests ranging from restaurants, hotels to roads and buildings. Sudan's imports from China in 2009 were valued at US\$1,875.85 million (HoL, 2009). The third interest is China's responsible great power image, that has risen in significance with China's interaction with the international community: China's self-identity has evolved from a poor developing country to a peaceful responsible power that promotes the peace and stability of other regions, including in Sudan. Based on the former three categories, it can be concluded that China's national interests in Sudan have moved into line with the common interests of international society.

It can be said that the conflict in Sudan is a case that corresponds both with the normative principle of R2P and China's view of its international responsibility. It provides a chance for intervention cooperation between China and Europe and the advantages of each in the following areas: reducing the war-affected consequences; facilitating talks and negotiations between North and South Sudan; pushing forward an understanding of Sudan's ethnic and racial problems; and promoting the communication between Khartoum and relevant rebel groups.

As a result of these factors we can characterise the Chinese perspective on international responsibility in Sudan in the following ways. First it has to be recognised that China has faced an uncomfortable position in Sudan. China as a big investor in Sudan has inevitably been at the center stage, partly because its political and economic interests and partly due to the international demands that are made of it. Juba wanted Beijing to

pressure Khartoum for a reasonable deal in the oil revenue distribution and better oil transportation cooperation; while the North relies on China to prevent South Sudan's interest in new oil related infrastructure that might by-pass the existing route to the north. Many international actors expect China to intervene actively in the humanitarian crisis and provide 'no-strings' economic support, in contrast to western perspectives. These complex and contradictory demands place China in an uncomfortable position. China's historical support for Khartoum made the South reluctant to trust Beijing; while the western countries accused Beijing of complicity with Bashir's regime of human rights abuse and of passive reaction to the economic sanctions of the West.

How then does China hope to motivate Sudan in a Chinese way? China's principle of non-intervention has long been seen as an obstacle for international humanitarian activism. Criticism considered non-intervention to be little more than an excuse for Beijing's partnerships with pariah regimes and disinterest in human rights abuses that undermined the international efforts for promoting better governance. However, even if China still emphasises non-intervention in various circumstances, the norm of responsibility to protect has evolved. In order to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the UN authorized 1590 resolution under which the first peacekeeping forces entered Sudan. Beijing supported the resolution and sent its first group with an engineer corps of 275 people, transportation corps of 100 and medical corps of 60 to the area. This commitment has become the longest one in China's peacekeeping history. China also widely worked to develop infrastructure in Sudan, such as bridge and roads building, airport maintaining, water supply system repairing, electronic supply, transportation of personnel and materials, casualty treatment and public health. On 16th January, 2011, despite the close ties with Khartoum, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei immediately expressed Beijing's welcome of the successful referendum and Peoples Daily also praised Khartoum for respecting local people's own decision (MOFA, 2011). China also became one of the countries that established recognition of South Sudan at an early stage. Meanwhile, China continues to be a good funding source for an area in need of investment, loans and other financial support. Sudan's heavy debt could not be solved in an effective way without China.

Normative convergence and resolution of the Sudan case

Therefore we can address the three research questions as follows:

1. What is the degree of international responsibility in the case, and who gets to select the case?

China's attitude towards Sudan reflects three features of its interpretation of the international norm of responsibility. The first question is - who has the right to decide the case? For Western countries, what matters is not who has called the international community to become involved in a humanitarian case, as long as the situation is serious enough. But China always tends to support the decision when the case is defined by the UN or some regional institution. As Li Baodong (2012) pointed out China has always maintained that African issues should be settled by Africa in African ways. China commends and supports the unremitting efforts made by the African Union to promote the settlement of the issues between Sudan and South Sudan, and welcomes the roadmap adopted by the African Union in this regard. Taking into consideration the AU position on the situation between Sudan and South Sudan, China voted in favor of Security Council resolution 2046. During his speech, Li Baodong (MOFA, 2012) also highlighted that China has always maintained that the international community should take an objective, impartial and balanced position on Sudan and South Sudan, and avoid taking sides or imposing unbalanced pressure on the parties, and refrain from interfering in the mediation efforts of the African Union and other regional organizations and countries.

2. What is the appropriate response of international actors to the security issue: what are the range of response methods?

The second question is - what is an appropriate response to humanitarian crises? Here it must be noted that there is not an accepted defined scope of R2P and clearly the current categories of four crimes is too narrow. The human rights abuse issues are far more than the crimes listed in R2P. Chinese officials and scholars have debated the issues of sovereignty and R2P. Although they may agree that the international community has a responsibility to ensure standards for states' behaviour, conservatives still considered inner governance as a domestic issue where only local people have the ultimate rights. Plus the Chinese government is very cautious of military intervention not only because of its own one-party ruled system, but also because there is no solid evidence to support the success of military-led intervention. China prefers to focus on issues of post-conflict construction rather than military intervention, because they hold that the root of conflict is wealth sharing, and no improvement could be achieved in conditions of extreme poverty.

3. What is an acceptable degree of intervention in normative power terms - to what degree should international actors be prepared to compel compliance on the dispute parties?

The third question is - can the international community compel compliance and to what degree should the international actors intervene into the security dispute? While the Western counterparts paid more attention to institutional establishment, such as democracy, legal system, efficient and transparent governance, the Chinese have focused on development, such as infrastructure construction, economic packages and investment. The former approach requires sanctions and possibly even military intervention to force dispute parties to comply. In contrast, China considers the post-conflict construction as an economic development task. It places economic rights in front of political rights, because in China's logic, hungry people need food first rather than voting. Therefore, they actively engaged in education, hospitals and roads building and only passively urged the recipient to improve its governance.

Case study 2: International responsibility in counter-proliferation and the Iran case

This second case study looks at the rising problems of sustaining counter-proliferation in the post-Cold war international order, looking at the most pressing case today: Tehran's attempt to develop a nuclear weapons capacity. This case is paradigmatic of the problems of counter-proliferation in the Second Nuclear Age (Bracken, 2003). In the first nuclear age - the Cold War - proliferation was based on dyadic deterrence between conventional superpowers. In the second nuclear age, which is strongly focused on Asia, we see multiple-player deterrence among states who are using nuclearisation as a mechanism of state construction and as a way of by-passing the complex barriers to conventional deterrence.

What is the nature and extent of international responsibility over the Iran weapons programme?

The international community has been relatively united in defending the non-proliferation regime and Chinese willingness to support the regime has increased in the post-Cold War period in line with its general integration into multilateral institutions. But China's position on non-proliferation enforcement remains strongly shaped by its own strategic calculus:

China's nonproliferation agenda is not substantively different from that of other prominent supporters of the nuclear nonproliferation regime where horizontal proliferation is concerned, but the level of concern over particular issues is. The relative lack of Chinese

interest in dealing with what are regarded elsewhere as cases of considerable proliferation concern is the result of the perceived level of direct threat to China that these cases represent (Boutin, 2011: 358).

Consensus on non-proliferation enforcement is now being strongly tested by the nuclear activities of Iran. Iran has had a long-standing interest in civil nuclear capacity going back to the era of the Shah. A significant change occurred in 1992 when Russia and Iran signed agreements to construct four Light Water Reactors. By the early 2000s Iran had achieved full-cycle capacity in nuclear fuels. In 2005 the IAEA made a report to the UNSC stating that Iran was in breach of inspection conditions under the NPT. The UNSC passed repeated resolutions after 2007 requiring Iran to suspend enrichment activities. Tehran refused and indeed expanded the number and quality of centrifuges employed in enrichment. Iran has defended these practices by stating that the NPT guarantees the rights of all states to peaceful use of nuclear energy and that a number of other countries that are 'non-nuclear-weapon' parties to the NPT, including Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands have uranium-enrichment facilities, as well as the five 'nuclear-weapon' parties to the NPT, and yet these countries do not face restrictions on their activities (Mousavian, 2012: 189). Despite these claims Iran has faced the toughest sanctions imposed on any country for breach of non-proliferation norms. These include unilateral US-imposed sanctions that date back to the 1979 crisis and now cover: non-proliferation actions against those arming Iran; trade and investment restrictions; restrictions on sensitive materials; sanctions on financial dealings and asset holding; and restrictions on Iran's ability to operate in fuels markets. Some of these sanctions by the US have been condemned by Russia and China as unfair restrictions on legitimate international commerce and likely to harm progress towards a negotiated settlement. Nevertheless international sanctions have continued to expand being undertaken by countries and regional organisations including the EU. The P5+Germany group convened by the European Union has conducted four negotiating rounds with Iran up to 2012 without making much progress on their declared aim of 'stop, shut and ship': stop refinement, shut down processing, and ship uranium at over 20% refinement to accepted destinations, probably Russia. UN sanctions saw four rounds between 2006 and 2010. In November 2011 the IAEA issued its strongest statement to date on the military implications of Iran's programme:

The Agency has serious concerns regarding possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme. After assessing carefully and critically the extensive information available to it, the Agency finds the information to be, overall, credible.

The information indicates that Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device. The information also indicates that prior to the end of 2003, these activities took place under a structured programme, and that some activities may still be ongoing (IAEA, 2011: 10).

In 2012 the European Union and the United States and a number of other countries including Japan and Canada further tightened the sanctions regime, targeting Iran's international oil trade and its financial system (CFR, 2012). Sanctions are now having a very evident effect on the Iranian economy and yet counter-proliferation experts continue to hold that sanctions alone will rarely halt nuclearisation if a regime is determined to proceed and perhaps has some external sponsors that will be willing to deflect some of the pressure. This is the role that China played over DPRK nuclearisation but its behaviour over Iran has been much more nuanced and indeed continues to evolve.

China like Russia has very significant economic and strategic interests at stake over Iran, and West Asia more generally. Yet it is not possible to characterise China as a sanctions-buster on Iran so much as a sanctions-avoider. China continues to trade and invest in Iran having received waivers that allow it to do this. At the same time China has been very careful not to appear as any kind of sponsor to Tehran. This can be explained in four ways:

- a) China is more dependent on Arab oil than on Iranian energy and would not compromise its emerging strategic partnership with Arab countries to sponsor Iran: it makes no sense for China to make a host of enemies across the Middle East in order to gain one friend;
- b) Both in its unilateral and multilateral politics China has been careful to keep Tehran at arm's length. President Ahmadinejad has tried to copy the Pakistani strategy of getting in under China's wing, including through Shanghai Cooperation Organisation membership. But China has resisted since it does not wish to bring Tehran's problems within its orbit;
- c) China wishes to defend its reputation as a responsible great power and that means upholding the NPT and following IAEA recommendations. It regards itself as having been consistent on this front and the US as having been highly inconsistent. Thus the US did not sanction India or Pakistan after 1998 nor did it not follow IAEA recommendations on Iraq's weapons programme in 2002-03;
- d) On matters in the UNSC China follows an obvious track of triangulation between Russia and the US. From Libya to Syria to Iran the Chinese position is always in some part a sub-equation of the Russian and American positions. China has been happy for the Kremlin to lead resistance to the military option on Iran just as China led this resistance on North Korea.

The problem with these calculations is that they could yet culminate in Iran's nuclearisation, which presents an even graver problem. Despite China and Russia's opposition to the military option on Iran they are not in a position to halt this as they did over North Korea (Kerr, 2005). If sanctions fail then war is likely and this has major repercussions for Chinese economic and strategic interests in West Asia. In an article in 2010 two Chinese analysts pointed out that if the United States succeeded in creating a pro-American regime in Iran, this would have very negative impacts for China given Iran's location as "an important geopolitical fulcrum of the Middle East countries" (Wang and Xia, 2010). They advocated four principles for resolution: one, a negotiated settlement; two, respect for Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy; three, Iran cannot have nuclear weapons (buneng yongyou hewuqi); four, reduce not escalate tension on the issue:

It is in all sides interest to prevent the nuclear crisis from going from bad to worse, from danger to conflict. To do this, on the one hand, cooperation should be strengthened with relevant countries to support Iran, to safeguard Iran's legitimate rights, including political, diplomatic, military equipment and technology relations in exchange for security interests in Iran's oil; on the other hand, it is necessary to deal with the United States, to let the United States know that the use of force cannot be relied on to solve all the problems in the world, and this will serve to improve the U.S. diplomatic strength and gambits in China's eyes.

Iran is one of the main means of access to energy, and therefore, China advocates resolving the Iranian nuclear issue in a peaceful manner as this accords with the fundamental interests of China. At the same time, to ensure the national stability and security of Iran is also of long-term strategic significance to China. If Europe and the United States go to war and gain a victory, Iran will become the second Iraq, and this will directly block China's energy access and contain China's development.

However as this assessment was given in 2010 and no agreement seems closer, China's insistence on a negotiated solution faces accusations that the Chinese are running a 'dual game' - using UNSC resolutions and 5+1 engagement to demonstrate China's great power responsibility while defending its energy needs and buying time for Tehran's weapons programme.² At a press conference in Qatar in January 2012 following his visits to Saudi Arabia and UAE Premier Wen Jiabao was forced to defend China's continuing economic relationship with Iran at the same time as offering an unusually vocal rejection of Iran's

² This is debated by John Garver (2011) who concludes that from 'circumstantial evidence' the charge of a dual game is correct.

nuclearisation. He said "China adamantly opposes Iran developing and possessing nuclear weapons," but also that China's oil trade with Iran is "normal trade activity," and that "legitimate trade should be protected, otherwise the world economic order would fall into turmoil" (Reuters, 2012a).

It can be seen that China's commitment to non-proliferation is sincere but not so absolute a principle that it overrides national interests in energy security and defending the strategic status quo in West Asia. As such China's Iran strategy also has to be seen in the context of Russian-Chinese defence of regime status quo from Damascus to Islamabad. This is a risky path for China to follow since it is clear that at some point the military option to at least punish Tehran, if not halt its activities, may become unavoidable. This would push the Middle East into a crisis that would have highly unpredictable outcomes, including for energy prices.

In contrast to China's conditional sanctioning of Iran the European Union has now introduced restrictions that largely duplicate those of the United States. According to the EU's trade commission, the EU27 was Iran's largest export market in 2010 with €13bn of goods (17.8%); China was in second place with €12.5bn (17.1%). As this suggests the success of an economic sanctions regime on Iran requires common compliance strategies from Europe and China in the first instance. From 1 July 2012 Europe embargoed Iran's energy exports that constituted 90% of trade. New measures followed from October 16 2012 that included a freeze on assets of more than 30 Iranian companies in Iran's oil and gas sector, including the National Iranian Oil Company, the National Iranian Tanker Company and the National Iranian Gas Company. The oil embargo was also extended to gas exports (Platt's, 2012). On the same day that the freezing of assets was introduced by the EU, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei told the daily press briefing in Beijing that China opposed further sanctioning of Iran:

We oppose the imposition of unilateral sanctions on Iran and believe that using sanctions to exert pressure cannot fundamentally resolve the Iran nuclear issue. It can only make the situation more complex and intensify confrontation... We hope that all relevant parties can show flexibility, increase communication and push for a new round of talks as soon as possible (Reuters, 2012b).

It seems therefore that the EU and China have reached a point of divergence over Iran: they share common views on non-proliferation; they have divergent views on who can enforce compliance, on whether international commerce should be impacted to ensure compliance, and on whether sanctions are a viable instrument for achieving compliance.

Normative convergence and resolution of the Iran case

We can therefore evaluate the normative convergence of Europe and China in counter-proliferation in the following ways:

1. What is the degree of international responsibility in the case, and who gets to select the case?

China's answer is broadly the United Nations Security Council and its reporting agencies such as the IAEA. Regional organisations willingness to nominate cases for international responsibility should also be taken in to account, provided they are nominating for their own region - regional organisations responsibility for other regions is much more limited. The EU is a strong supporter of the UN system also; but it does not confine its concerns to Europe and its neighbourhoods. The holistic conception of security adopted by the EU means that there is no aspect of global security that the EU considers beyond bounds;

2. What is the appropriate response of international actors to the security issue: what are the range of response methods?

The European Union is an enthusiastic sanctioner. As the world's largest economic organisation and commercial actor it has much more leverage in these areas than other countries or regions. Moreover, it seemingly finds it much easier to reach consensus on deployment of sanctions than on hard compliance by coercion. China dislikes negative sanctions and prefers positive incentives. The real divergence is that China has a different view of the relationship between national and international responsibilities. This means not only that China places national interests in development or strategic affairs ahead of international responsibilities but that national interest responsibilities are seen as inflexible requirements whereas international responsibilities are contingent possibilities. It is also the case that China views European or American deployment of normative claims as operating in parallel with the threat of the use of force, which rather undermines the assumption that these are sincerely normative;

3. What is an acceptable degree of intervention in normative power terms - to what degree should international actors be prepared to compel compliance on the dispute parties?

The second nuclear age has transformed perspectives on counter-proliferation. The NPT was designed for the Cold War era in which a limited number of countries had technical capacity and geostrategic need for nuclear weapons. The second nuclear age has brought nuclear capacity within the range of countries that lack a broad technological base and introduced weapons into geostrategic environments that are much less stable than the Atlantic system. Most of this is taking place in close proximity to China making Chinese

contingent responses to proliferation difficult to rationalise. Europe seems determined to impose compliance on Iran, both in defence of non-proliferation norms and because the consequences for Middle East stability - and contagion towards Europe - of failed compliance are potentially enormous. China seems to have reached the point where it will not support sanctions either because these contradict its interpretation of the balance of national to international responsibilities or because China does not have confidence in sanctions to produce a resolution.

Conclusion: evidence of normative convergence?

It is not hard to identify the sources of disagreement in European and Chinese approaches to global and regional governance generally, and in the specifics of security governance. These are:

- i) The relationship between national interests and responsibilities and international interests and responsibilities are viewed differently. Only where there is clear correspondence between national interests and responsibilities and the international equivalents will China support international actions on these lines. In the case of Sudan national and international responsibilities have converged allowing China to take a common position with other countries, including Europe. In the case of Iran national and international interests and responsibilities have diverged leading to a divergent position to Europe;
- ii) Compliance options reflect development priorities. Europe, as the world's largest and most sophisticated commercial alliance, can often sanction without facing very significant economic consequences (note Europe's reluctance to deploy sanctions against Russia precisely because the economic and political costs for Europe would be high). China, as the world's largest developing country, fears the rise of development constraints from the expansion of economic sanction regimes, whether applied bilaterally or multilaterally. China views political objectives as best met by political mechanisms not economic mechanisms. In essence, political objectives and mechanisms and economic objectives and mechanisms should not be confused;
- iii) In terms of the specifics of security governance, the following conclusions can be made. Europe and China engage more often in a widening range of security areas that extend from single issue cases, such as Syria, through regional security cases, such as Afghanistan-Pakistan, to global level challenges of international and human security, such as second age nuclearisation, global terrorism, and human security consequences of climate change.

In terms of perspectives and cases there is no comprehensive mode of engagement between China and Europe, though this may emerge in time. At present Europe and China engage case by case with their postures largely determined by three questions: Who decides that the case meets the conditions for international responsibility? What are the range of mechanisms for intervention appropriate to the case? And what are the limits - political and practical - within which compliance can be imposed? Note that while China still favours a restrictive approach to intervention - derived from both its political identity and its practical interests - and Europe favours an expansive approach - for the same reasons - intervention itself is no longer an issue of fixed divergence. Thus the norms of security governance are mobile between China and Europe and in consequence mutual perceptions of identity as security actors are also mobile. There is still clear evidence of normative separation between the Chinese government and European governments but perspectives on normative power in security governance are closing, albeit with some distance still to travel.

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